

# Everybody Loves Nala

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**Author:** ThatPersonYouMightKnow

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**Summary:** Nala finds love from the strangest of places thanks to a strange poison that contaminates the waterhole. Meanwhile, Zazu struggles with feelings of his own...

## \*Chapter 1\*: Chapter 1: The Curse of Life

**AN:** Apologies—again—to all of my readers who are wondering where I've been for most of the month. I'm not dead or anything. I took a couple of weeks off to work on my own book. A writer's work is never done, sadly. Do not despair, though. I'm back—with my fiftieth story! Story number fifty! *Fifty!* Isn't that amazing? Thanks to everyone for sticking with me and reviewing for so long. Without you, I wouldn't be here right now. So, without further ado, here is *Everybody Loves Nala!*

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### Everybody Loves Nala

#### Chapter One: The Curse of Life

Shocker lay in his vine hammock, a glum look on his face that just never seemed to go away. Not since... Well, not since he'd received his powers in the first place. With great power, came great depression. Or at least it seemed so.

"Why can't I get what I want?" he hissed, thinking of the million billion things that had gone so horribly wrong in his life. Right from the moment of his birth, it seemed that life had picked a target to tease and torment. Shocker had drawn the short straw.

But the powers had changed all that, surely? Made everything better? Allowed him to become one of the most powerful creatures on the planet? He felt truly important now—right?

Wrong. Shocker—more than anything else in the whole world—wanted *desperately* to die. After an incident with Simba, Nala and Haiba, he was killed. But then—and this was a surprising outcome—he came back to life. Whether it was magic or his powers themselves, he didn't know. It was a total mystery.

And the most miserable curse of his life.

Every time he died—every single day—Shocker came back to life. It wouldn't stop. It just wouldn't. Not ever. It would continue—again and again and again—until the very end of time. And maybe even after *that*, too.

He'd heard that many lions would give their four legs to have just a slice of immortality. It was one of the most sought-after gifts in the world. The power to keep on living—to survive—for ever. Not impossible—just a bit unlikely.

But Shocker didn't like to think of it as a gift. He would give anything just to become mortal once more. To have the ability to die. He'd tried to kill himself before, in various different ways. Jumping off cliffs, getting caught in stampedes, claws to the throat—you name it. Shocker had attempted this so many times to end his life, but every single time, he just kept coming back. The curse—or gift, depending on who you were talking to—was unbeatable.

It turned out that his worst enemy was one of his own powers.

Shocker closed his eyes, taking a deep breath and trying to comprehend the depression that had plagued his body for such a long time. *Why does life have to be so cruel to keep me here? Why can't I just... die?*

"You thinking about dying again?" a voice interjected into his thoughts.

"Hmm?" Shocker's eyes snapped open, and he craned his neck sideways to get a look at the lion sat a few feet away from him.

Shocker had recently picked up a partner in the form of a rather vicious lion known as the Interceptor. One of the far more intelligent souls on the earth—despite how insane he appeared to be. Very useful in coming up with evil schemes.

"I'll trust you not to meddle with my inner conflict," Shocker replied, sitting up from his resting position. "You can take your complaints and questions to Froggy."

"If he ever shows his ugly face again," the Interceptor retorted, a frown crossing his face. Froggy was another one of their so-called 'allies'—yet far less intelligent. Probably more of a lackey than a partner. Slave, even.

"He'll be back," Shocker assured him, hauling himself out of the hammock. "The weak ones always come crawling back to their masters."

*He's getting all 'deep' again,* thought the Interceptor with a roll of his eyes. Shocker had a habit for talking about how he was better than everyone else. The treacherous cub didn't exactly take into account just how pathetic he really was sometimes.

"Yeah—whatever," the Interceptor mumbled. "But that's not the point. We've been stuck here for days. No plans. Hardly any food. Just what do you propose that we do, huh?"

"Patience, Interceptor," Shocker said slowly, rolling his shoulders around in order to bring some strength back into them. He'd been napping for quite some time. "Patience."

"Patience," repeated the Interceptor. "So you keep saying. But how is that going to help us in the long run? We might starve to death. I'm the survival expert and I'm still hungry."

"You'll live," Shocker told him. "And I lost my appetite for food quite some time ago." To tell the truth, he'd been starving himself deliberately in order to see if that would kill him for good. Sadly, that experiment wasn't going quite according to plan—much like everything else in his life.

"It won't hurt just to zip into the Pride Lands and—" the Interceptor began, but Shocker cut him off.

"No," he said firmly. "The Pride Landers cannot know that we're still alive and well. Especially after all of that business with Scar."

The Interceptor's frown widened. Scar was one of the most villainous lions to walk the earth. He died a long time ago, but thanks to Shocker's abilities, he rose back from the dead. It turned into a deadly battle, and in the end, Shocker prevailed. Suffice to say, Scar was now gone for good.

"What makes you think they even care?" the Interceptor asked. "We saved them all from that freak. If anything, we should have a free pass to live there."

"Don't be so absurd," Shocker snapped. "The inhabitants of the Pride Lands are a sneaky bunch. It won't take long for their suspicious minds to think up that we were involved with it somehow."

"Yeah—but we *were*," the Interceptor retorted, thinking of the incredible resurrection Shocker had performed. And it had all gone so horribly wrong... "Bringing him back to life was entirely our fault."

"That's beside the point," Shocker replied. "We—well, *I*—fixed everything. He won't be coming back again. I made sure of that." His eyes crackled with angry electricity. The Interceptor found this particularly alarming. This cub had serious issues.

"Whatever," said the Interceptor, "but I think there's still nothing wrong with killing a quick antelope for dinner. I'm starving."

"We are *not* returning to the Pride Lands," Shocker said. "It's completely out of the question. Although it will please you to know that I have come up with a new insidious scheme—far cleverer than my previous efforts."

"Why do I get the feeling that you always say that?" the Interceptor muttered under his breath.

"You see," Shocker began to explain, "my enemies—and yours, for that matter—are very... *intelligent* when it comes to facing off against us."

"Don't I know it?" the Interceptor exclaimed. "We've tried everything. Nothing works. The little mites are invincible. I've given up on catching 'em out."

"They are *not* invincible," Shocker said. "They're just... *difficult*. What we need is a far more efficient way of destroying them that doesn't even involve us being in the vicinity of the Pride Lands."

"And how do you propose we do that?" asked the Interceptor. "Sounds impossible to me."

"Not if you don't possess the knowledge that I do," Shocker retorted. "There are many ways to destroy a cub. Clawing and scratching is the general method, but if you're smart, then there are many more options available to you."

"Don't mock my methods," the Interceptor said. "There's nothing wrong with a prolonged hunt through the jungle."

"There is when your enemy keeps beating you again and again," replied Shocker. "Tell me something: Have you ever used poison before?"

"Poison?" The Interceptor's eyebrows rose. "Can't say I have."

"It's a splendidly effective method," Shocker told him. "And very simple, too. All we need to do is concoct a deadly substance and then unleash it into the water supply. It'll only be a matter of time before Simba, Nala and Haiba need to

take a drink. And then..." He mimed someone's throat being slashed with a claw.

The Interceptor chuckled. "Ha-ha-ha! *I like it!* So we poison the little brats and watch as they vomit up their own guts!"

"From a moderately safe distance, of course," Shocker said. "It's the perfect plan. No one—not even the great King Mufasa—will be able to trace it back to us."

Shocker smiled. Today was going to be much happier than he first thought.

## \*Chapter 2\*: Chapter 2: Pick Your Poison

### Chapter Two: Pick Your Poison

"I just don't understand it." Sarafina shook her head in confusion. "Where do they go? It's been days—how is the kingdom supposed to sustain itself?"

She was becoming increasingly concerned about the sanity of the King and Queen. Her best friend was Sarabi, and she hardly even spoke anymore. Just what had happened? In just a few months, they had become completely different animals. Far different from the kind rulers that she had once known.

Recently, King Mufasa and Queen Sarabi had disappeared. The pride knew nothing of where they had gone, or what they were doing. But Sarafina, deep down, knew that they were up to no good. Something bad—something *evil*—had happened to them. They were up to something that would most likely result in the total destruction of the kingdom.

To any normal lion, that would sound absolutely absurd. But the Pride Lands had been put through so much in recent times that it was practically second nature now. How had things managed to become so dangerous in what was once a peaceful kingdom?

"You still worrying, Mom?" her daughter Nala asked from beside her. She was stood at the edge of Pride Rock, hoping in vain that the King and Queen would return.

"No," Sarafina replied, a little too quickly than she would have liked. "It's not that there hasn't been a king or queen in the Pride Lands for two hundred years or anything. I'm just fine."

*Shoot. That sounded sarcastic, Sarafina thought to herself. Can you be any stupider?*

"That sounded sarcastic," Nala told her mother. "And what do you mean, there hasn't been a King or Queen for two hundred years?"

"Don't you know *anything* about the history of the kingdom?" Sarafina replied, turning to look at her daughter.

Nala shrugged sheepishly. "Not really. A know a lot about the *recent* history—it hasn't been that nice."

"Well, there was a time two hundred years ago when there was no active king or queen," Sarafina explained to her cub. "The whole pride more or less shared it all between themselves. It was sort of... equal."

"Hmm..." Nala narrowed her eyes. *That doesn't actually sound so bad, she thought to herself. I mean, Simba's parents pretty much suck as rulers. I don't think they've done anything good for months. And now they've disappeared. It's not looking good for them.*

"But, as I said, it hasn't been that way for hundreds of years," Sarafina said. She sighed. "Looks like it'll be going back that way if Mufasa and Sarabi don't return."

"Wait—me and Simba don't get to rule the kingdom?" Nala exclaimed in surprise. "That's not fair!"

"Only the *current* King and Queen have the power to forfeit their right to the throne," Sarafina retorted. "And they're not here."

Nala frowned. "You're pulling my leg. You just don't think two cubs are up to the job—and we've done a lot for this pride, you know."

"I wouldn't ever lie to you, Nala," Sarafina assured her daughter. "And I know you've done a lot—certainly more than Simba's parents."

"We'll find out what's going on with them," she said. "They've been acting like this for months. Looks like their evil plan is finally being put into place."

"What makes you think they have an evil plan?" Sarafina asked curiously.

Nala shot her a look. "Mom, *everyone* who acts weird has an evil plan. Especially around here. You should know that by now." She looked around. "And speaking of weird, where is Simba?"

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"I don't know why I let you trick me into this," Simba said, a frown on his face as his claws dug into the branch he was

clinging to. "You're an idiot, Haiba. A first class idiot."

"When I said, 'let's go for a swim,' I didn't mean *this*," Haiba retorted with a disappointed sigh. "It wasn't like I *planned* for it to happen."

Simba and Haiba were in quite a predicament. They were both clinging to small branch, and were being washed away by a ferociously strong current in one of the rivers around the outskirts of the Pride Lands. Simba made a mental note to stick to the waterhole from now on. He wasn't going to make a mistake like *this* ever again.

"Well, we can't just let ourselves drown or fall down a random waterfall," Simba protested. "We need to get out of here!"

"Okay, genius, so how do we do that?" Haiba asked. "Let go of this branch and the current will pull us under. We won't ever resurface. I know all about drowning—I once dated a river, actually."

"I have to ask you something," Simba said. "Do you just want to kiss everything that you see?"

"I'm one with the world," Haiba told him. "I have a respect for all creatures—however lifeless they may seem. You should try it sometime—it's very enlightening."

"Maybe later," Simba said, "once we *stop ourselves from drowning*."

"Oh," Haiba said. "I forgot about that."

Simba rolled his eyes, and groped for the edge of the river with one paw. He strained as hard as he could, but safety was just out of reach. "No!"

"Hey, did I mention there's a random waterfall just up ahead?" Haiba suddenly asked.

"Oh, come on!" Simba exclaimed, getting a strange sense of déjà vu. He'd been through this once before—a long while ago with Nala—and seemingly it had come back to haunt him. Did every day of his life have to involve some kind of crazy disaster?

"All right, I have an idea," Haiba said. "You're gonna have to trust me, though."

"I don't really have much of a choice," Simba said flatly.

"Okay—I'm going to climb onto the branch," Haiba explained.

Simba stared at the branch. It was hardly thick enough for him to stand on. "You're kidding me, right? You'll never get on it!"

"I said to trust me," Haiba said. "It's either that or drown."

Simba frowned. "Just do it!"

Haiba nodded with a grin, and then slowly began to hobble up onto the branch. Simba watched with a tense feeling in his stomach.

As Haiba stood on the left side of the branch, the right side began to rise into the air. "*Whoa!*" Simba cried as he was lifted upwards. "How is this supposed to work?"

Haiba wobbled as he tried to keep his balance on the branch. "You can jump onto dry land!" he told him. "Do it!"

With a grunt, Simba leapt from the raised edge of the branch and tumbled onto the safety of dry land. "*Oof!*"

Haiba leapt as well, landing on the opposite side of the river. "I told you to trust me," he said. "See? We're safe and sound."

The two watch as the branch sailed over the edge of the waterfall and tumbled into the wet depths below.

"That was close," Simba sighed, panting from exhaustion. "*Too close.*"

"It's not starting out to be a very good day, is it?" Haiba asked. "I was hoping for something a little more... quiet."

"Well, we can't always have what we want," Simba retorted, getting to his paws. "Come on. We'd better get back to Pride Rock. Nala's probably wondering where we are."

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"Ha-ha-ha!"

Shocker's cackles could be heard echoing across the jungle. He was stood in a clearing with the Interceptor, staring at a variety of colourful plants surrounding them.

"It's just plants," the Interceptor said. "Not exactly worth an evil laugh."

"Do not let your eyes deceive you," Shocker replied. "For these plants are among the most deadly in the world."

"What do you mean?" the Interceptor asked.

"Well, just look." Shocker walked over to a thin, icy-looking blue plant. "This plant will freeze you for ten years if you eat one of its leaves. And this one..." he indicated a purple plant nearby, "will make you feel like you're being tickled for all eternity. As I said—these plants are more than meets the eye."

"Great. Cool, so..." The Interceptor looked at the variety of colourful—and dangerous—plants. "Which one do we use?"

"Well..." Shocker wandered over to a red, thorny plant. "This one could be the most deadly of all. Slow, painful death to all that drink the juices it secretes."

The Interceptor chuckled. "*I like it!*"

"But it's probably not," Shocker suddenly said, turning away from the plant.

"Huh?" The Interceptor's face fell.

"Appearances can be deceiving," Shocker said, turning to a bright pink plant with very pretty leaves. "Now *this* is a deadly plant. It looks so innocent—yet possesses a power that none of us can comprehend."

"You sure?" the Interceptor asked, sounding doubtful. "It seems a little... girly to me."

"Nonsense," Shocker said. "This is our key to success. No one will be able to stop us with this plant."

However, Shocker didn't know that this plant possessed a very different kind of power, and that it would be *far* from his key to success...

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**AN:** Looks like Shocker picked the wrong plant. Bet you're pleased he's still in the stories, though, huh? I really like having these recurring villains in every story. So, how will all of this turn out? What does the plant do? Don't worry—I will be updating with two more chapters tomorrow. I won't disappear for over half a month.

## \*Chapter 3\*: Chapter 3: Contamination

**AN:** Yay—I'm completely on time. I don't think it's even been twenty-four hours yet. Lucky for you, eh? Anyway, here's the next two chapters. We even get to see more of Zazu in this story. After all, we haven't seen him in a while. It should be refreshing.

**LionKingFactsGuy2:** Of course the puns are starting to grow on you. They grow on *everyone*.

**Haradion:** Love is a powerful ally—or enemy, depending on how it's used. Which is it in this story? Well, I'm not really sure. You'll see.

**the-mysterious-other:** I love Shocker and the Interceptor as partners. They have great chemistry together. So many funny jokes—and, apologetically, *puns*—to make.

**anonymous13:** You're working on a novel of your own, eh? Go for it. Writing would be my idea of a great job. Just make sure I know what it is so I can buy it, should you ever choose to get it published. I completely forgot it was Thanksgiving, too—we don't really celebrate that in Britain, actually. A sad thing, too, because I was really looking forward to grabbing some poor, innocent turkey from a cold warehouse and frying it in the oven for dinner. Yum, yum.

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### Chapter Three: Contamination

It was the dead of night in the Pride Lands. Most of its inhabiting creatures were fast asleep, and the only thing that could be heard was the sound of the crickets chirping. The grass was shifting slightly from the faint breeze in the cool night air—or maybe it was just the sound of two villains up to no good.

"We don't need to be in the Pride Lands," he says. "We'll remain a moderately safe distance away," he says," mocked the Interceptor, as he and Shocker trudged through a field thick with long grass. "Could you be any more mistaken?"

"Shut up," Shocker growled. "How am I supposed to introduce the plant into the waterhole without being here? My powers are plentiful—but they can't transport objects from one location to another."

"Shame," said the Interceptor. "That would have actually been *useful*."

"Don't start with me," said Shocker, glancing at the funny pink plant that was slung over his back. He was sure that it had to be one of the most deadly poisons ever known to animals. After all, that was why it looked so pretty, right? A disguise for unwary passers-by. A clever trick. Truly this was the work of genius. "Once the water supply is infected, we can sit back and watch the destruction as it unfolds."

"How do you even know what it does?" the Interceptor asked, still looking rather doubtful that this girly-looking plant was the deadly killer that Shocker had made it out to be. If he was honest, it looked more like the kind of plant that would induce *pleasure* rather than *pain*. Maybe Shocker was wrong...

"It'll be something interesting, I can assure you that," Shocker replied over his shoulder. He grinned at the beautiful plant, unfazed by its rather feminine appearance. "This is going to be the end to all of our problems. Simba, Nala and Haiba will be dead by the end of tomorrow. Poisoned by the power of this insidious plant."

The Interceptor rolled his eyes. *You can't be serious*, he thought. *'Insidious plant'? Yeah, right. If that plant is dangerous, then I'll rip off my incredibly manly fur.* "I have a bad feeling about this."

"Well, I *don't*," Shocker retorted. "For once, let me get on with things. Or do I have to replace you with Froggy?"

"No," the Interceptor mumbled quietly.

"I'm sorry?" asked Shocker, meaning for him to speak louder.

"I said no!" the Interceptor yelled.

Shocker smiled, pleased. "Thank you," he said, before focusing on what lay ahead of him.

The two had ended up at the top of a tall hill, which overlooked the waterhole. The full moon hung in the sky, giving the water a sparkly effect. If Shocker had a heart, then he would have found it very moving. "What an ugly place."

"How exactly do you get them to drink a *plant*?" the Interceptor questioned, shooting him a confused look. "That doesn't make sense to me."



"We just extract the deadly liquid inside," Shocker responded, making his way carefully down the hill and over to the edge of the waterhole. "And then we can empty it into the waterhole, thus contaminating *everything*." He let out an evil little chuckle.

The Interceptor shrugged. "Whatever," he said, before following Shocker. "Just cut that thing open so we can get out of here. That pride isn't going to be too happy if they catch up snooping around in the middle of the night."

Shocker didn't say anything. He yanked the plant from over his shoulder, holding it above the water. "You stupid cubs won't stop me this time," he muttered, before staring at the plant, as if he could see right through it.

With a swift motion of his claw, he cut off one of the plant's stems. A wide, malevolent grin spread across his face as a glittering pink liquid seeped out, pouring into the waterhole. It looked incredibly attractive, yet all Shocker could focus on was the supposed 'destruction' it would cause.

Within a few seconds, the liquid had disappeared as if it were never there. Shocker smiled.

"All done," he said, before shoving the plant into the Interceptor's chest. "Now get rid of this. We can't have anyone discovering the evidence, now, can we?"

"Me?" exclaimed the Interceptor. "How come I have to do it?"

"Because *I'm* the one that contaminated the waterhole," Shocker retorted, poking a claw into his chest. "Now do it—before I turn you into dust."

Shocker wandered off, leaving a frustrated Interceptor all on his own. "*Now do it—before I turn you into dust*," he mimicked angrily. "What a creep."

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"You know, Haiba, I'm growing increasingly concerned that you're just a magnet for trouble," Simba sighed, as he lay on the hard ground.

"Like I said before—it wasn't my fault," Haiba told him. "This is all just a big misunderstanding."

Simba and Haiba were lying right at the bottom of an incredibly large pit, which they had fallen through on their way back to Pride Rock. It had been covered up by several leaves, meaning that they had failed to notice it earlier. They'd been stuck down there ever since. "What is there to misunderstand?"

"Uh... well... nothing, I guess," Haiba shrugged, staring at the incredibly boring surroundings. "We're just having a bad day."

"Yeah—first we almost end up getting sucked up by a waterfall," Simba said, "and now we've been stuck in a massive pit for the whole day."

"I don't even know who would spend all that time to dig this out," Haiba said in bemusement, climbing to his paws. "What purpose could it possibly serve?"

"An *annoying* purpose," retorted Simba. "Probably some trap from Shocker or the Interceptor—maybe even Froggy. So we end up trapped down here for ever and starve to death. We might even have to eat each other to survive."

"Don't be ridiculous," Haiba said, before turning to the walls of the pit. "With a little bit of skill, I'm sure we can climb out."

He dug his claws into the dirt, and began to hoist himself upwards. Simba watched with amazement. "Is today just a survival exercise for you or something? I'm beginning to think that you're the one who dug the pit out in the first place!"

Haiba turned a very nervous shade of pink. "Uh... what makes you think I would do something like that?"

Simba narrowed his eyes in suspicion. "Wait a minute... you *did* dig this pit out, didn't you?"

"Now, now, Simba, it was only for your own good," Haiba responded.

"I'll show you your own good!" Simba said angrily, grabbing him from the pit wall and shoving him up against it. "The whole day we've been stuck here! *The. Whole. Day.*"

"I just wanted to show you how resourceful I can be," he said worriedly, afraid of Simba pounding him into nothingness. "After all, it wasn't like you were planning on doing anything else, was it?"

"*And* you made us go through that whole business with the waterfall!" Simba ranted. "How could you?"

"Oh, come on—I had it all under control," Haiba assured him as if it were nothing.

"*All under control*?" screamed Simba. "Wait until you see the control I have *strangling your neck!*" He panted loudly with rage.

Haiba just stared at him, wide-eyed. "You're an angry little cub, aren't you?"

Simba gritted his teeth, growling at the top of his voice.

Haiba frowned. "Wrong thing to say."

## \*Chapter 4\*: Chapter 4: Hiding the Evidence

### Chapter Four: Hiding the Evidence

The Interceptor stood at the top of the gorge. He held the pink plant in one of his paws—although it was long since dead now that Shocker had extracted the liquid from its innards. Its leaves were drooping, and the pink colour looked rather dull now. *If anything, it looks tougher dead rather than alive*, he thought.

He glanced down at the rocky bottom of the gorge, several feet below. "This'll do," the Interceptor decided, before tossing the recently deceased plant over the edge. He watched as it impacted with the ground, creating a faint rustling sound that no one would ever hear.

The Interceptor smiled. "There we go," he said, before turning away from the gorge. "No one will think to look in a dusty old place like this."

"It's amazing what you can find in a dusty old place like this," Pori said with amazement, as she stared at the pink plant on the ground. "I don't think I've seen a plant like this in years and years and years! Isn't that right, Zygote?"

"I would not know, Pori," Zazu replied, folding his wings and not even bothering to correct her on his actual name. She just didn't seem to take it in anymore. He'd met animals who were bad with names before—but this was just ridiculous! "I'm not an expert on common fauna of the Pride Lands."

The two hornbills were stuck in the dead-looking gorge in the Pride Lands. Pori had insisted due to her curious nature. Truth be told, staying in the kingdom made Zazu feel rather sick—after all, he did lose his job.

"Oh, this plant isn't from the Pride Lands, silly," she told him, staring at its dead remains with an excited look in his eyes. "This is *very* rare. Very, very, very, *very* rare!"

"Pori, I hardly think that you're suitable to comment on the rarity of such—" Zazu began, but was interrupted by the hyperactive hornbill.

"The *Mapenzi* plant is only known to exist in twelve separate kingdoms," Pori explained fluently, causing Zazu's eyes to almost pop out with shock. "Its growth is very slow—one plant can take up to *five hundred years* to fully form. Those who drink the liquid inside feel incredible affection for the first animal they see."

You could have knocked Zazu over with a feather. He'd never seen Pori speak so intelligently before. "But—but—but—" he sputtered, unable to comprehend it. It was just... just impossible! She didn't speak like that! Not even! It wasn't right! It wasn't natural! He had to be dreaming! He *had* to be! "How... how do you know all of that?"

"It's very simple, Zazu," Pori replied, stepping over to his side, whispering to him. "I did my homework."

Zazu frowned. "I didn't think you took any form of education, Pori," he said, still feeling rather dizzy and confused from this sudden burst of intelligence she had displayed.

"Well... I learnt all about plants a while back," she told him. "I used to teach other animals about them too, once." She glanced at the remains of the plant. "This particular *Mapenzi* plant has been dead for at least twelve hours, though. Someone must have drained all of its liquid out."

*I don't believe it!* Zazu thought. "And there's me thinking that you weren't worth anything at all. I apologise for thinking so little of you, Pori."

"Aw, don't worry about it, Zanax," Pori replied, patting my lightly on the back. "It's not your fault that you don't recognise my potential. By the way—two plus two is six, right?"

*She still needs a little bit of work*, Zazu thought.

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Haiba emerged from the pit the next morning feeling achy and bruised all over. He made a mental note never to trick Simba into an awkward situation ever again. The guy had quite a temper when you got him fired up...

"Excuse me, Haiba." He grunted with pain as Simba stepped on his back to pass over him. "I need to get back to Pride Rock. Nala's probably wondering where I am."

"Say 'good morning' for me," Haiba mumbled, before slipping away into unconsciousness.

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"That'll teach him," Simba said to himself, hopeful that Haiba had learnt his lesson after tricking him into getting stuck in pit. It didn't even make any sense. Maybe he just wanted some more attention after the death of his cousin a while ago. Either that or he was just insane. Maybe even both.

"Simba? Just where have you been?" Nala's voice called from a few feet away.

Simba turned his head to the side, to see Nala lazily lying across a rock in the middle of a field. It looked like she'd been up all night. "I've been looking out for you all night," she told him. That explained it.

"It's a long story," Simba told her, "and entirely Haiba's fault. I'll explain later. What are you doing?"

"Nothing," Nala replied glumly. "Everything's gone completely boring."

"Any sign of my parents?" he asked with audible disinterest. To be honest, he didn't really care whether they came back or not. They'd changed in recent times, and he wanted nothing to do with them anymore.

"Nope." Nala shook her head. "No sign of them in days. My mother's gone crazy with worry."

"Hmm..." An expression of curiosity crossed Simba's face. "They're up to something. It's not like them to normally disappear."

"That's what I told her," Nala said. "What do you think they're up to?"

Simba shrugged. "I don't know. Something evil. Maybe they're gonna show up and reveal their evil plan in a few days. Who knows?"

---

After regaining consciousness, Haiba managed to claw his way over to the waterhole. "Okay... I'm never ever going to do anything like that ever, ever again."

Feeling both mentally and physically drained, he glanced down at the water. He noticed that it was glittery—and he could have sworn that it was looking slightly pink—but he figured that was just the sun shining down on it.

He bowed his head to take a drink—

—when a voice suddenly sounded from behind.

"You *beat him up*?" yelled Nala.

"He was messing with me!" Simba called over his shoulder, as he ran away from Nala. "You don't understand!"

"Is there's one thing we don't do, then it's beat each other up!" Nala shouted at him, looking furious.

"That's not what you said when Scar brainwashed you the other day!" Simba retorted.

"Don't make this about me!"

Haiba was about to open his mouth to defend Simba, but then thought better of it. After all, he had beaten him up pretty good. What harm was a quick little chase around the waterhole going to do to him?

Shrugging, Haiba returned his head to the waterhole. He bent down and took a sip of the water.

He yanked back instinctively, feeling a fizzy taste on his tongue. As he swallowed the water, his insides felt all warm and gooey.

"*You come back here!*" Nala cried, watching as Simba raced off into the distance. "You can't run for ever, Simba!" Frowning, she turned away, trudging over to the waterhole. "I don't know what's gotten into him... Hey, Haiba, how are you?"

Haiba took one look at Nala, and his heart melted. His eyes grew incredibly wide, as did his smile. In just an instant, he was completely smitten with her.

Nala stared at him confusedly, taken aback by how his eyes were boggling at her. *That's... weird*, she thought. "Um, Haiba... are you okay?" she asked, feeling a sudden urge to run away as fast as she could.

Haiba's smile wobbled; the mere sound of her angelic voice was enough to make his chest explode with love for her. If

she was beautiful before, then now she was a *goddess*!

"Hey, Nala... did I ever tell you you're the most beautiful cub I've ever met?"

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**AN:** Yes, it's that old trademark: a lovely cliffhanger to tease and annoy all of your faithful readers. You could always force me at gunpoint to give you the next chapter, though. Either that or hire the Interceptor. But it'll cost you.

Hopefully I'll see you tomorrow. I'm trying to get back into the swing of updating with two chapters every single day. I know in recent times I've only been updating every three or four days—and that's just not very consistent, is it? I'm sure you'll leave your very encouraging reviews—after all, it's what motivates these little tales I write—and come back tomorrow for more. See ya.

## \*Chapter 5\*: Chapter 5: Love and Passion

**AN:** Another two chapters of this warm and loving story. I warn you now—it's going to get a little bit crazy. But you probably knew that, didn't you?

**Haradion:** I think there's a lot more to Pori than *any* of us know. Will we find out soon? Probably.

**Heerokitsune18:** The most awesome author ever? You've just made my day.

**kora22:** Haiba's had beatings before and he'll have them again. At least it's not as bad as his cousin being brutally murdered right in front of him.

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### Chapter Five: Love and Passion

Nala froze. Staring at Haiba. She'd heard him say stuff like that before, but this... this was... different. It just didn't seem right. Out of all the things she'd be freaked out by Haiba saying, this would have been relatively low on the list. Yet she had a feeling that something wasn't right...

Haiba just continued to stare at her with a wide smile and wide, wide eyes. That was probably what scared Nala the most. She'd never seen eyes that big before. It looked like he was possessed! *Was* he possessed? She just didn't know.

"Haiba, um, that's very sweet, but, uh..." Nala stammered, unable to take her eyes off Haiba's. She was afraid that if she looked away for more than a second, then he might gobble her up or something. "I've actually, um, already... got a... boyfriend."

She felt a pang of disappointment in her stomach at the thought of Simba. Only five minutes ago had he let it slip that he'd beaten Haiba to a bloody pulp. Maybe Haiba's new... *behaviour* was something to do with that?

"So, you see, Haiba, that's why, um, I have to say that saying I'm beautiful is very flattering, but I can't exactly form a relationship with you," she tenderly tried to explain, just about managing to keep eye contact with him. That was a challenge in itself.

"Nala..." Haiba frowned, and it looked like his heart had been wrenched right out from his chest. Tears began to well up in his eyes, and he began to cry what looked like a waterfall. "*You've broken my heart! Why do you always have to be so mean?*"

Nala backed away instinctively. *Oh, dear.* She watched with horror as Haiba cried out copious amounts of tears. It was unlike anything she'd ever seen before. Just what the heck had gotten into him? "Uh, Haiba—no, don't cry—it's not like that—oh, please stop crying."

"*I don't want to speak to you!*" Haiba raged. "*I don't like you anymore—yet I still love you at the same time! Just go away and leave me alone! For ever!*" He continued to sob overdramatically.

*This isn't right!* Nala thought with wide eyes of her own. "Haiba, calm down. I really do still like you!"

The tears instantly stopped, and Haiba pounced at Nala with such force that she found herself pinned to the ground; surprising, considering normally that pinning animals down was normally *her* job.

"Oh, Nala!" Haiba cried with joy, a massive grin on his face. "I could kiss you! In fact, I think I will!" He began to kiss her on both cheeks, again and again and again.

Nala felt sick. "Get off me, Haiba!" she cried, pushing him away from her. "There's a time and place for bodily contact—and it's not now!"

"But I thought you really liked me?" She could see the tears forming in his eyes once more.

*Not again,* she thought worriedly, thinking of how ferocious Haiba's sadness had been before when she'd rejected him. "Haiba, I do like you, but me and you—together—just isn't going to work out."

"But why?" Haiba inched ever closer to Nala, his bulging eyes almost touching hers. "We could be so good together, Nala! I love you! Ever since I woke up this morning, I've felt a changed cub! My heart explodes with passion! Your voice is music to my ears. Your voice is angelic. And you look... well, you look like a goddess. Can you honestly deny me my love?"

Nala gulped nervously. "Well... Haiba, it's just that... I only think of you as a friend. A brother. You and me..." she shook her head gently, "it's just not going to work out."

Haiba frowned. "So you *don't* love me." He started to walk away slowly. "I might as well just kill myself right now..."

"No, no, no!" Nala raced over to him. Her mind was completely drained of ideas. There was nothing she could do to stop these intense feelings Haiba was experiencing. She couldn't explain it. Had something happened to Haiba? Had Simba pounded him so much that his mind had become warped? Then again, his mind was warped before that, so...

"What?" Haiba turned around, still staring at Nala with those horrific wide eyes. "What could you possibly say that'll prevent me from ending my miserable existence?"

"Um... well, uh..." Nala struggled to find an answer. There was only one thing she could think of—but it was such a betrayal of her actual feelings that she was conflicted over whether to say it or not.

"All right... I'll be your girlfriend," Nala gave in, with a sigh, her shoulders sagging.

Haiba's eyes seemed to glow with happiness. "*Brilliant!*" He pulled her into his chest. "We shall be married by tonight!"

"*Married?*" Nala exclaimed, trying to wrestle away from his grip. "Hey, hey—I said *nothing* about *marriage*. I'm kind of saving that for later on, you know?"

"Don't be ridiculous, Nala," Haiba said with a smile. "It's clear that we're meant to be. Together for ever, isn't that right?"

She didn't know why, but that last line sounded like a threat. Just to be on the safe side, she would be careful not to anger Haiba. "Oh, yes, together for ever... *darling*, but isn't getting married by tonight just a little bit too quick?"

"Nonsense!" proclaimed Haiba. "I'd want to be tethered to you as soon as possible! We can live out the rest of our lives in eternal bliss!"

This was nothing like the Haiba she knew. Something horrible—maybe even something evil—had happened to him. Sadly, she knew that it was her job to figure out what was going on. That is, if Haiba would even let her go for more than five seconds.

Sadly, she *also* knew that she had no other choice but to agree to marry him. "Okay, Haiba—we shall be married by the end of today." She let out another big sigh. Screwing up her relationships *really* wasn't what she'd expected today.

"I just *knew* you would agree!" Haiba exclaimed ecstatically, smiling as his soon-to-be mate. "After all, we are soul mates."

*Excuse me while I throw up*, Nala thought. Could he be any cheesier? This was turning into a fairy tale! "Whatever you say, dear."

---

"Can you imagine it?" Shocker asked with a happy smile, as he paced back and forth around his jungle home. "They're probably lying there right now, screaming and crying for help!" He laughed evilly. "And no one will be around to help them! They will die! Die now and die for ever!"

"Crude, kid," said the Interceptor. "Very crude."

"I hope you hid the evidence in a safe place," Shocker told him. "We can't have anyone finding out what we've been up to. This cannot be traced back to us—at all. Understood?"

"Don't worry—I hid it at the bottom of a gorge," the Interceptor explained.

Shocker stood rigid, his eyes wide with... shock. "Where did you hide it?" he asked in a quiet voice—something surprising for him.

"I hid it in some gorge," the Interceptor told him again. "Why? No one's ever gonna think to look down there."

"You... *idiot!*" Shocker's paws crackled with electricity. "The gorge is right in the middle of the Pride Lands!"

"Well, actually, it's more to the left—"

"Shut up! Anyone could find it there! Some sneaky idiot with a nose for trouble could pick it right up and discover everything that we've been doing!" Shocker ranted and raged. "We have to get it back—before it's too late."

"Get it back?" the Interceptor said. "But you said to stay away!"

"That was *before* you had the bright idea to hide the evidence in the place we committed the crime!" Shocker yelled. "The next time I tell you to hide something, then hide it somewhere where no one will actually *find it!*"

"Well, just do it yourself next time," the Interceptor mumbled.

Shocker stared at him. "Don't make me kill you," he said, before walking off.

"I'd like to see you try," the Interceptor whispered under his breath.



## \*Chapter 6\*: Chapter 6: The Situation Worsens

### Chapter Six: The Situation Worsens

"I regret ever coming up with this plan!" Shocker yelled as he charged across a field in the Pride Lands. He was completely focused on retrieving the 'evidence' in their supposed 'crime'. The Interceptor had neglected to mention that the plant was dead anyway; it wasn't like anyone was going to know what it once was. "How could you? This was supposed to be perfect—and you wrecked everything!"

"I did *not* wreck everything," the Interceptor insisted. "The damn poison's probably still worked anyway—and if you ask me, then I think that plant isn't as deadly as you first thought."

"What are you talking about?" Shocker grumbled, not having a clue about what he was trying to tell him. "That poison is perfect."

"It was *pink*!" the Interceptor exclaimed.

"What did I say about appearances being deceiving?" Shocker retorted, stopping and turning to face him. "It's obvious that the plant was a trap for the unwary. It probably makes animals turn inside out!"

"Or it could turn them into girly little fairy princesses," the Interceptor shot back. "Maybe appearances *aren't* deceiving. Did you ever think about that, huh?"

"There is no such poison in the world that turns animals into girly little fairy princesses," Shocker told him. "If there was, then that means nature has a very cruel sense of humour."

"I'm telling ya—that plant is useless," the Interceptor said. "If we walk in there and the whole kingdom is dead, then I'll eat myself."

---

"I think I'm gonna eat myself," Nala muttered, rolling her eyes as Haiba clung to her tightly. It looked like he would die were he to let go of her. "Haiba, are you sure you can't give me just a *little* breathing space?"

Haiba gasped. "But, Nala, it's not safe out there! I can't have any of those nasty monsters hurting you! After all, you are so perfect. To ruin your beautiful figure would be one of the worst crimes anyone could ever commit."

*I'd find that sweet if he wasn't completely insane*, Nala thought to herself. "Well... that's very kind of you, Haiba, but I don't think walking a little bit is going to ruin my 'perfection'."

"We can't risk that," Haiba said, tightening his hold on her. "We're going to wait here all day—and then be married as the sun sets. I can't think of a more beautiful moment than that. Don't you agree, my love?"

"Oh, yeah... great," Nala said flatly. "I don't suppose you'd want to invite Simba to the wedding by any chance, do you?" If there was something going on, then surely he could figure it out, right?

"Of course I do!" Haiba proclaimed with a happy grin. "I want everyone I've ever known to attend our wedding! Including my own reflection—I once had a date with him. You don't realise how lonely your constant rejection has made me... It's about time that you confirmed our love for each other."

"Yeah, whatever," Nala replied. "But... if you're going to invite Simba, then you have to find him first."

"Hmm..." Haiba put a paw to his chin. "Aha! You're absolutely right, dear! I'll go and find him, while you wait right here. That way I'll *know* that you're safe. No one's going to attack you at a safe place like this!"

*Oh, thank you!* Nala thought happily. She was beginning to suspect that Haiba was never going to leave her alone—*ever!* "Yes, you do that, Haiba. I'll wait right here—safe and sound."

"I'll be back soon, my sweet," Haiba said, backing away slowly. He began to run off, in search of Simba.

Nala waved after him, feigning a smile. "Missing you already..."

"I was missing you before I even left!" Haiba called over his shoulder, as he disappeared into the distance.

Nala scratched her head. "That doesn't even make sense." She shrugged. "Oh, well. At least it gives me a chance to get away from him. Something screwy is going on here..."

Turning away from the waterhole—and unaware that the answer to her problem was right behind her—she began to make her way back towards Pride Rock. Maybe her mother knew something about this kind of thing. After all, she had been on quite a few adventures of her own.

"Nala!" Right on cue, Sarafina wandered over to her daughter. "Have the King and Queen returned yet?"

"Nope," Nala responded, shaking her head. "No sign of 'em. I'm sure they'll turn up sooner or later, though."

"Oh. And what about Simba?" Sarafina asked.

"Oh, he's... gone away with Haiba for a while," she replied. "I'm just here, doing... nothing." She remembered the question she was going to ask her. "Um, Mom?"

"Yes, dear?"

"Well... have you ever heard of someone having... sudden intense feelings for another animal?" she asked, pretending to sound like it was just a curious cub question.

"Why would you ask that, Nala?" Sarafina wondered with a little laugh.

"Just curious," Nala replied with a shrug. "I heard a... story once, where one lion took one look at a lioness and fell instantly in love with her."

"Hmm." Sarafina thought for a moment. "Well, aside from love at first sight, I really don't know—"

"Love at first sight?" Nala interrupted.

"Yes—it comes from quite an old legend," Sarafina explained. "Love at first sight was said to be some sort of curse spread around by something known as the *Mapenzi* plant. Apparently once you drink its juices you'll instantly fall in love with the first animal you see."

"Really?" Nala said with casual interest.

"Yes." Sarafina nodded. "Although most say that the plant has been extinct for years, and that love at first sight is the only remainder of the curse." She sighed dreamily. "Ah... it's so sweet."

"Well, thanks for your help, Mom," Nala said brightly, before walking past her. "See ya round."

"Any time, Nala," Sarafina said, walking towards the waterhole. "Any time."

"A plant?" Nala said to herself as she wandered away. "So if you drink the juices, then you fall in love with the first animal you see? Sounds like what happened to Haiba. But where on earth would he get the juices from...?"

Nala suddenly stopped dead in her tracks, whipping round to look at the waterhole. She noticed that the water had taken on a pink tint, and had gone all glittery. At first she had assumed it was the sunset, but could it possibly be something more?

Her eyes snapped onto her mother, who was lowering her head to take a drink from the waterhole. Gasping, she ran towards her. "Mom—wait! The water is—"

But it was too late. Sarafina turned around to face her cub, and Nala could tell that she'd already drunk the water. After staring at Nala for less than a second, her eyes grew incredibly wide, as did the smile on her face.

"Nala... you're looking incredibly yummy today," Sarafina said seductively.

Nala shook her head. "Oh, now this is just sick," she said, before sprinting away as fast as she could.

Sarafina chased after her with a hungry look in her massive eyes. "Come back, Nala! Come back! We could be so great together!"

---

"All right, we must be close," Shocker said, wandering over to the edge of the waterhole. "Now, where did you say this gorge was?"

The Interceptor shrugged. "Somewhere around here. I don't know. I just found it and dumped the plant inside."

Shocker stared at the water, sniffing it curiously. "Yuck!" he exclaimed, backing away from it. "It smells of... *niceness*!"

"'Deadly poison', eh?" said the Interceptor with a raised eyebrow. "Looks like a love potion to me. Look how glittery and girly it looks."

"I told you the plant wasn't a poison!" Shocker said, pointing at the Interceptor accusingly.

"What?" The Interceptor looked outraged. "*You're* the one who wanted to use it! Don't go blaming it on me!"

"Nonsense," declared Shocker, turning away with his eyes closed. "You're just trying to ignore your mistakes. If you'd listened to me and picked the red plant, then my plan would have worked at an optimum level—"

"Oh, stop nattering on, you great big girl!" the Interceptor cut in, before giving Shocker a hard nudge.

"Whoa!" Shocker wobbled on his paws, and then toppled into the glittering waterhole. *Splash!* The sparkly liquid erupted into the air.

The Interceptor watched, chuckling with amusement, as Shocker remerged from the waterhole, coughing and spluttering. "*Bleh!* Why does that liquid taste so warm and—?"

Shocker stopped, as his eyeline caught sight of something.

That something just happened to be Nala, who was in the middle of being chased around and around in circles by her own mother. But he ignored that. All he could concentrate on was how unbelievably beautiful she was.

His eyes grew amazingly wide, and he smiled at her.

Shocker—one of the most evil cubs ever to walk the earth—had fallen in love.

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**AN:** So that's Haiba, Sarafina *and* Shocker who have all become victims of the love potion. What could possibly happen next? Where's Simba? Will Nala end up getting married to *four* different animals? Only time will tell, my friends. Only time will tell.

## \*Chapter 7\*: Chapter 7: Feel the Love

**AN:** Time for the final chapter of this crazy story. What a wild ride it's been.

**MarkPol:** Yep—I would say that humour was one of my stronger points. After all, you have to laugh with the weird stuff that I churn out for these stories.

**anonymous13:** I don't think Shocker likes *anyone* in particular. Not even himself. However, he might feel a bit different in the closing chapter of this story...

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### Chapter Seven: Feel the Love

"Tell me something, Zuby," Pori said as she hopped around their 'home' in the Outlands. "If you're so smart, then how come you lost your job?"

"Because the King is an uncompromising maniac with no intelligence," Zazu replied glumly, depressed by just the thought of the great position he once held in the kingdom. The job where he was respected—mostly—and revered for his services to the pride. "That's why, Pori."

"Oh," she replied, ceasing to hop around. "I thought it was because you're some kind of an idiot."

"An idiot?" Zazu exclaimed in offence. "You're referring to me—*me*—as an idiot, when your intelligence stretches about as far as that of a piece of filth on the ground!"

"Now, there's no need to be rude, Zago," Pori replied, seemingly unaffected by anything that Zazu had said. "After all, you just have to enjoy life and everything that it brings—whether it's good or bad."

*There she goes again,* Zazu thought, surprised. *Either she's a genius or completely brainless. I don't know what to think anymore!*

Actually, Zazu *could* think of something, and it was that Pori had come across as rather... attractive to him. A strange feeling—and not one he'd felt before—but he was beginning to suspect that it meant he had certain... *emotions* for her.

He couldn't even explain it—she was about as smart as a rock. How could anyone find beauty in someone who couldn't even talk properly? It just didn't add up. He'd been raised to find a suitable, intelligent, perfect mate—not one who couldn't even add two and two together!

Unless maybe that lack of intelligence was something he found alluring, perhaps. Her stupidity could be her best trait. Was that even a normal thing to think?

"Um, Pori..." Zazu began nervously, "what do you think about... love?"

"Love?" Pori put a wing to her chin in thought. "Hmm... well, the word has four letters. And it rhymes with 'dove'. That's what I think."

"No, I mean the meaning," Zazu told her.

"Oh. Well, in that case, I think that love is probably the most important thing of all," she said. "It's what binds us all together. *And* it rhymes with 'dove'—one of my favourite words! Isn't that great?"

"Oh, yes... positively enchanting," Zazu muttered in response.

To be honest, he was completely clueless. Much like Pori. At least they had *that* in common.

---

Simba had bad days and good days. The good days usually consisted of fun and adventure. As for bad days? Well, they were more along the lines of your best friend trying to invite you to a wedding.

"Simba, it'll be the wedding of the century!" Haiba kept telling him. "You simply *have* to come!"

Simba had fled to the jungle for the day. After nearly being killed by Nala for nearly killing Haiba, he felt that it was in his best interest to lay low for a day. Otherwise, he'd probably end up causing even *more* trouble.

He had to admit, it was a bit of a surprise that Haiba had shown up in the clearing where he was hiding—with a bunch of

funny-looking plants surrounding him. After all, he had beaten him to nearly an inch of his life, so what the heck was he doing here? Prancing up and down, spouting about a wedding? It just didn't make any sense!

Then again, that was what most days were like for Simba.

"Haiba, what are you *talking* about?" Simba exclaimed, grabbing him by the shoulders. "You're acting crazy!"

"My wedding to Nala," Haiba told him, causing a wave of immense curiosity to descend upon Simba's face.

"Your... *wedding*... to... *Nala*?" Simba said slowly, trying to digest the words.

"That's right," Haiba nodded with a funny grin. What was up with him? Come to think of it, Simba had noticed that his eyes were looking a bit too wide for his head to contain...

"Haiba, you're not getting married to Nala," he told him. "You sure you haven't hit your head or something? Your eyes look like boulders."

"Of *course* I'm getting married to Nala," Haiba said. "Tonight, in fact! And *you* are cordially invited! Isn't that just joyous? You can see us pledge our devotion to each other—for ever and ever..." He had a dreamy look in his eyes.

"Something isn't right here," Simba said, looking aside. "I know you're weird—but you wouldn't make something like *that* up. What's going on with you, Haiba?"

"I'm in love!" Haiba proclaimed. "*That's* what's wrong! No—it's what's *right*! Now, let's go, Simba—I don't want to keep my new mate waiting!"

Haiba advanced towards him, but Simba pushed him backwards. If Haiba was infected with something, then he certainly didn't want to catch it.

Haiba stumbled backwards onto a weird light-blue plant, and ended up with one of the leaves in his mouth. He accidentally swallowed it, and stared up at Simba.

His eyes shrunk back down to their normal size, and he looked around as if nothing had happened. "What am I doing here?" He put a paw to his head. "Must have been some party..."

"You don't remember anything?" Simba asked, surprised.

"Simba?" Haiba only now seemed to notice him. "... I don't know what's happened. One minute I was at the waterhole... and the next..."

Simba wandered over to the blue plants. "You ate one of these leaves," he told him, "and then you snapped out of it."

"Snapped out of what?" Haiba asked.

"You were acting all 'goosey' around me," Simba explained. "You were saying something about marrying Nala."

"I thought I felt a bit funny after swallowing that water," Haiba said to himself.

"What water?" Simba said.

"You know—at the waterhole," Haiba replied. "It was looking all sparkly—and a little bit pink, if you ask me."

"Hmm..." Simba looked at the other plants in the clearing. All of them were colourful and unique. His eyes fell on a pink one. "Maybe these plants have different powers or something. I'm guessing that pink one somehow got into the waterhole."

"Why would someone want to put a love plant in the waterhole?" Haiba wondered.

"Well, I don't know," Simba said with a shrug. "But if it's in the waterhole, then that means that *everyone* who drinks from it will fall in love with someone else!"

"That's not too good," Haiba said with concern. "If everyone's too busy making out, then no one will have time to do anything else."

"That blue plant brought snapped you out of it," Simba said, indicating it. "So if we put that into the waterhole, then I guess it'll make the water normal again."

"Good plan," said Haiba. "But I feel really sorry for Nala—last time I checked, she was at the waterhole. *Anyone* could have fallen in love with her!"

---

Nala wasn't having a very good day. As soon as she had escaped the clutches of her mother—who had now fallen in love with her—she found herself faced with one of the most surprising sights of all.

Shocker was stood in front of her. She was beginning to suspect that he'd followed her all the way out to the outskirts of the Pride Lands. Come to think of it, she had heard what sounded like someone following her for half an hour...

"Nala, um, uh... hi," Shocker stammered, staring at the ground. He had wide eyes and a shy smile on his face. "I just wanted to, uh, ask you if, um..."

She honestly couldn't believe how freaky the day had become. First Haiba had fallen for her, then her own mother—she couldn't believe that—and now *Shocker*? Out of everyone, the most evil cub ever to exist had fallen in love with her? This was just getting ridiculous...

"Well, Nala, um... will you, uh, perhaps want to... go out... with, uh... me?" Shocker asked sheepishly.

"No, Shocker," Nala said, walking past him. "I don't have time for this."

Shocker crumpled to the ground, heartbroken. "*Why?*" he moaned. "*Doesn't anyone love me? Doesn't anyone care about Shocker?*"

Nala rolled her eyes.

---

The Interceptor didn't think he'd be admitting that today was more of a success than he first thought. After all, the sight of Shocker pining after Nala like a pathetic little wimp was rather amusing, to say the least...

The creep deserved it, anyway. Shocker had made up a plan that was doomed to fail, and then he'd tried to pin the blame on *him*? The Interceptor had every right to rip his legs off, one at a time.

He was about to consider tearing Shocker's head off, when he was pounced on by someone unseen.

"*I've got him!*" Simba yelled triumphantly, as the Interceptor slid to the ground. "I knew it was him all along! Tried to poison the waterhole with your sneaky little plant, did you, Interceptor?"

"Get off me!" the Interceptor yelled. "I'm not the one who comes up with girly little plans like that!"

"Oh, sure—that explains why you're the only villain within three hundred miles," Simba said sarcastically.

"What about Shocker?" the Interceptor suddenly asked. "He's pining after your little girlfriend right now after falling in his own love juice."

Simba glanced at the waterhole, and saw that it had turned a pretty pink colour. "One drop and you fall in love with the first animal you see," he said to himself. "This is a lot worse than we first thought."

The Interceptor brushed Simba off of him, getting up. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got plans of my own to take care of."

"*Simba!*" a voice yelled.

Simba turned around to see Nala in the distance, sprinting towards him. "Nala? What are you running from?"

*Zap!* A lightning bolt streaked over Nala's head, narrowly missing her.

"*I'll teach you to break my heart!*" a voice that Simba recognised as belonging to Shocker cried. "*I loved you!*"

Simba turned to Haiba, who was stood next to him, the blue plant slung across his back. "Haiba, you'd better put that plant in the water."

Haiba nodded. "Got it." He grabbed the blue normality plant and dumped it into the waterhole.

The two watched as a blue liquid began to seep out from the plant, covering the pink liquid and engulfing the whole of the water. The plant turned a dull grey colour, seemingly drained of life. It didn't take long for the blue liquid to fade away, and the water returned to its normal clear colour.

"*You have to help me!*" Nala screamed, leaping into Simba's forepaws. "It won't stop! Everyone's in love with me! Haiba, my mother—even Shocker!" She sobbed into Simba's shoulder. "Make it stop! *Make it stop!*"

"*You can't get away!*" Shocker yelled, reaching the top of a hill. He reared up for an almighty jump, and leapt into the air.

Simba, Nala, Haiba and the Interceptor watched with amazement as Shocker sailed over them, and landed right in the waterhole.

*Splash!* It took exactly nine seconds for Shocker to emerge from the water, his eyes no longer wide. The effect of the plant had worn off, just as Simba had suspected now that he had returned the water to normal.

"I'll take care of him," the Interceptor said, reaching out with a paw and yanking Shocker out of the water by the scruff of his neck. "What did I tell you about blaming others for your failure?"

"Oh, shut up, you miserable idiot!" Shocker snapped. "How was I supposed to know that the plant was—?"

The Interceptor clobbered Shocker over the top of the head. A dopey smile spread across his face and he fell unconscious.

"And that," said the Interceptor, "takes care of that."

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It didn't take too long for Simba to lead Nala's mother into the waterhole, and soon she had snapped out of her sudden intense affection for her own daughter.

"That was a nightmare," Nala said, as she sat beside the waterhole. "I don't want to ever go through anything like that ever again."

"You're telling me," said Haiba. "I'd like to keep my love life to myself, thank you very much. I don't need a love potion to do it for me."

"You should be thanking me, then," Simba said. "I'm the one that discovered the answer to the problem. In fact, I think you should do everything that I tell you to for the rest of the day."

"Not really," Haiba said. "You beat me up earlier—you can think of saving us all as an apology."

Simba's face fell. "I really hate it when you do that."

Haiba grinned. "I still love you, though, Simba."

Simba frowned. "That's what I'm afraid of."

### The End

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**AN:** Another day, another crisis. All in a day's work for Simba. Bet you didn't think he'd end up saving the day after beating Haiba up, eh? Ah, well. But hey, it's time for the penultimate story next. Looks like the series is coming to a close...

**NEXT TIME:** One of Shocker's evil schemes results in him accidentally creating identical clones of Simba, Nala and Haiba. When they go to war with their counterparts, chaos ensues...